

**Amherst Agricultural Commission Meeting
November 12, 2013
First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Wm Levine, Bernard Brennan, Rebecca Fiske, Abby Getman, John Thibbits, Ronnie Wagner

NON-MEMBERS PRESENT: Diana Stein, Joe Waskiewicz

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: 7:08 PM by Wm Levine

MINUTES: Ronnie Wagner made first motion to approve minutes from October's 2013 meeting as is, seconded by Wm Levine, all in favor.

J & J FARMS: Joe Waskiewicz requested that the Amherst Agricultural Commission assist in supporting the completion of maintenance of drainage ditches and culverts along Meadow Street in Amherst affecting his agricultural land. Joe presented his concerns on the matter, Wm to follow up with Dave Ziomek for additional information.

TOWN FARM: Diana Stein reviewed concerns presented at the Amherst Town Meeting held on November 6, 2013 regarding the defeat of Article 11 (Saul Property in East Amherst Village) presented by CPAC. The Agricultural Commission plans to clarify the following questions with Dave Ziomek at the next meeting: 1) Is the request able to be resubmitted to CPA? 2) How do we go about getting it back to Town Meeting for a revote? 3) If the Park Grant awarded what do we do then?

TOWN WEBSITE: Rebecca Fricke expressed concerns about the Town of Amherst's website path to the agricultural links. Currently the link is via the "Visiting" section. After discussion and exploration, Rebecca made a motion to contact Kris Pacunas (web-designer) to add the "Amherst Farming" link to the "Living", "Business", keep under "Visiting" links. Seconded by Ronnie Wagner, all in favor. A subcommittee was formed with Rebecca and Abby to continue to look for additional improvements to be made.

PRODUCE PROCUREMENT IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS: Rebecca and Ronnie reviewed information from meeting with Dr. Faye Brady, Director of Student Services for the Amherst Public Schools. Dr. Brady said that she would present the Agricultural Commission's clarity inquiries and concerns to both the Wellness Committee as well as the School Committee.

PIONEER VALLEY FOOD SECURITY PLAN: Rebecca announced that the Plan has been published and recommended that the Commission review. The plan highlighted the main areas for improvement within the Amherst area include: lack of cold storage options, value-added processing centers, and slaughter services.

USDA NEW REGULATION PETITION: Abby announced that Friday, November 15, 2013 is the last day to sign/submit thoughts on the new regulations which are creating difficult hurdles for small farms.

ALL THINGS LOCAL: Bernard and John announced the intended date of opening for the food co-op is anticipated for the weekend before Thanksgiving. They updated the commission that the local producers have filled all supply demands except local eggs.

UPCOMING GOALS: The strategic plan of the Commission is in need of updating. *Grow Food Amherst* is orchestrating workshops. *All Things Local* is entertaining developing a workshop calendar once they become situated. It was also suggested to start in social media, potentially Facebook, to maintain a calendar and work as a common ground for producers to locate resources.

UPCOMING EVENTS: Pete Westover is coordinating the annual State Agricultural Commission meetings in December.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT: 8:22 PM, motion made by Bernard, seconded by Abby, all in favor.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY: Ronnie Wagner